

PROJECT EMN

Meeting held in Millbank, July 25th, 1986

Present : Mr. J.L. Mercier)
 Mr. C. Warren) - Imperial Tobacco
 Dr. P.J. Dunn) Canada

 Mr. R.J. Pritchard - Brown and Williamson

 Mr. E.A.A. Bruell)
 Mr. N. Davis) - BATCo.
 Mr. A.L. Heard)
 Dr. R.E. Thornton)

1. BACKGROUND

1.1 Rationale

I.T.L., in presenting their concept, believe that many of the constraints currently operating on the tobacco industry would be removed if it were not for the Smoking and Health issue. For example, as a result of the anti-smoking lobby, taxation is increasing and consumption is falling, and young smokers are declining in number. Politicians are not unhappy with these trends. Issues related to Product liability also constrained the industry and all such issues related to Smoking and Health.

1.2 Opportunities

I.T.L. stated that if we could remove Smoking and Health pressures the industry would stabilize and then grow. Productivity and market share were likely soon to 'plateau'.

1.3 Objective

"To work towards the discovery of a 'safe' cigarette, 'safe' in the eyes of those who say that the current cigarette is 'unsafe'." Such an objective is, in I.T.L's view, market oriented (in that it would expand the market) but is not marketing-oriented, i.e. concerned with short term targets.

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1.4 Business Aspects

- (i) Any return on an investment that led to an increase in smoking should be high.
- (ii) The potential complexity of the project made it difficult for [non-tobacco] competitors to enter.

1.5 Strategy

Briefly the project is related to a programme of research related to a three tier approach:

- 1. Eliminate [undesirable chemicals identified by Regulatory bodies] and test for biological activity. A broader interpretation is that noxa would be reduced to threshold levels deemed acceptable.
- 2. Modify [the cigarette].
- 3. Neutralize [by vitamins etc.].

which in turn relate to four research areas:

- 1. Smoke Chemistry - reduction of toxic components
- 2. Biological Tests (short and long term)
- 3. Epidemiology
- 4. Mechanism of Disease Production

I.T.L. believe that this calls for a Fundamental Research approach (attempting to acquire knowledge that others do not have), but at this stage, have not developed the Research Programme - (Phase 2).

2. DISCUSSION

- 2.1 It was accepted that the world-wide scenario on Smoking and Health was not greatly different to that in Canada. The importance of variations in the economy of individual countries was stressed (e.g. recent increases in consumption in Denmark), as was the role of drugs in societies where smoking was discouraged.
- 2.2 There were various views on the necessity and feasibility, of reducing specific chemicals. Only tobacco specific nitrosamines are unique to tobacco anyway and a moving target was anticipated. Compounds would always be added to the list or their acceptable limit lowered.
- 2.3 The more pragmatic approach of reducing tar [probably at constant nicotine level] was discussed. This approach had been specifically requested by regulatory authorities (e.g. U.S.A., U.K.), whereas there was equivocal advice on reduction of specific chemicals.

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The approach was also consistent with effects of nicotine such as the apparent negative association of smoking with Alzheimer's Disease, Parkinson's Disease, etc.

I.T.L. agreed that the approach of reducing tar : nicotine ratio was valid for future research.

The "Rationale for R&D" strategy paper (A.L. Heard, October 1985) which was agreed at the Research Conference in Rio, is based on ability to respond either to consumer demand or to regulatory authorities. Fundamental research on reduction of selected smoke components is thus already in the Group Research Programme. Monitoring of biological tests and performance of products against generally accepted tests are also in the Programme.

- 2.4 With regard to the four research areas, it was agreed that the first step was an on-going appraisal of the scientific literature as discussed in "Rationale for R&D". Resource in this area was being increased with the forthcoming appointment of a Senior Scientific Adviser in BATCo, Millbank.

The Scientific Research Group (S.R.G.) was charged with appraising the literature and, if necessary, organizing further work. It was noted however that a considerable amount of work was already going on in all four areas. The view was expressed that of the research areas, items 2-4 should drive item 1.

The S.R.G. would be asked to examine if sufficient work was being carried out to meet the requirements of the B.A.T. Group.

- 2.5 It was agreed that time scales could not be set, realistically because of the uncertain nature of scientific research. However, all necessary resources would be provided.
- 2.6 It was also agreed that the S.R.G. would consider the implications of the tar reduction programme in terms of necessary research. In any case the next meeting of the S.R.G. (Montreal, August 1986) was already scheduled to discuss nicotine in detail.

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CONCLUSIONS

It appeared that there was much in common between the aims of 'EMN' and the R&D strategy for the B.A.T. Group. However, differences were apparent in:

- (1) The B.A.T. approach of selectively pursuing smoke components, with the aim of being ready to respond on any aspect of smoke when requested in contrast with the all-encompassing approach forseen by I.T.L.
- (2) The goals for the B.A.T. programme were necessarily short (5 years), since longer term goals cannot be defined (those 'selected' today will inevitably change) this contrasts with the long term targets forseen by Canada (up to 15 years).

Further consideration should be given to these issues in the 1986 Research Conference in Sydney (September) and an agreed strategy developed.

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